

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **ETDM PROCESS**

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## CHAPTER 2

# ETDM PROCESS

### 2.1 OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process is to incorporate environmental considerations into transportation planning to inform project delivery. This process supports the environmental policy of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to “protect and preserve the quality of life, and the natural, physical, social and cultural resources of the State, while expeditiously developing safe, cost effective, and efficient transportation systems” ([Environmental Policy No.: 000-625-001-I](#)). The ETDM process provides agencies and other stakeholders the opportunity for early input and consideration of the environment in transportation planning. ETDM process objectives include:

- Early identification of potential issues for project scope development
- Timely decision making that includes consideration of environmental quality
- Full and early public and Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) member participation
- Linkage between planning and Project Development and Environment (PD&E) [including **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**]
- Incorporation of appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms during the planning process

These objectives are accomplished through stakeholder involvement, early consideration of environmental effects, integrating processes which were previously conducted sequentially, using interactive techniques and innovative technologies.

The ETDM process facilitates early interaction among transportation planners; federal, state, and local agencies; Native American Tribes; and affected communities. Through this process, the FDOT provides the opportunity for early stakeholder input on qualifying<sup>1</sup> transportation projects, which helps support planning decisions and develop the PD&E project

#### Key Features of the ETDM Process

- Early and continuous agency and community involvement
- Early identification of potential avoidance, minimization and mitigation opportunities
- Access to Geographic Information System (GIS) data in standardized formats
- Identification of potential key issues
- Maximized use of technology for coordination and project screening

<sup>1</sup> Refer to qualifying criteria provided in **Section 2.3.1** of this **Manual**.

scope with a clearer understanding of the environmental setting and potential concerns.

Intergovernmental interaction is accomplished through an ETAT assigned to each of the seven FDOT Districts. Each ETAT includes representatives from Metropolitan Planning Organizations/Transportation Planning Organizations (MPOs/TPOs), federal and state agencies, and participating Native American Tribes. Agency agreements between the FDOT/Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other state and federal agencies document the interagency understandings and agency-specific requirements for participating as an ETAT member in the ETDM process.

ETAT members use the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) to review project information, identify potential project effects, and submit comments to FDOT. This web-based GIS database and mapping tool provides access to project information and data about natural, physical, cultural, and community resources in the project area. The comments and other information are made available to the public on the ETDM Public Access Site (<https://etdmpub.fl.a-etat.org>). See **Section 2.4** for more information about the EST.

A District ETDM Coordinator leads the ETAT in each District. MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinators work with the District ETDM Coordinator and the ETAT assigned to the District in which their MPO/TPO is located. Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (Turnpike) works with different ETATs depending on the location of their projects. For example, when the Turnpike has an ETDM project in District 4, the Turnpike works with the District 4 ETAT and communicates closely with the District 4 ETDM Coordinator. The District, Turnpike, and MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinators also work with other FDOT, MPO/TPO, or local government personnel to identify qualifying projects and facilitate project reviews in the ETDM process. Refer to **Section 2.5** for more information about the roles and responsibilities of the participants in the ETDM process.

As shown in **Figure 2-1**, the ETDM process is composed of the Planning Screen and the Programming Screen. The Planning Screen best occurs when considering projects for inclusion or prioritization within a Cost Feasible Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The Programming Screen supports development of the FDOT Five Year Work Program. The results of the screening events link the transportation Planning phase and the PD&E phase. Each screening event centers on a project review and includes project preparation activities and follow-up tasks occurring before and after the review.

The ETDM Coordinator for the project sponsor (i.e., FDOT District, Turnpike, or MPO/TPO) uses the EST to notify the ETAT when a project is ready for review. At the same time, the information is published on the ETDM Public Access Site. During the review period, ETAT members and the public have the opportunity to provide input about potential project effects. FDOT or MPO/TPO personnel also begin to identify potential effects on surrounding communities. They seek to develop an understanding of community desires and concerns, as well as identify potential controversies related to the project. ETAT members perform multidisciplinary reviews specific to their area of expertise (e.g., wetlands or land use). These reviews help to:

- Determine the feasibility of a proposed project.
- Allow for early identification of potential avoidance, minimization, and mitigation opportunities.
- Focus the issues to be addressed during the PD&E phase.
- Create documentation and support information which may be carried forward into the PD&E phase.

At the end of the review period, the project sponsor (FDOT or the MPO/TPO) summarizes the comments gathered from the reviews. FDOT subsequently uses this information to focus the issues that need to be addressed during the PD&E phase and develop the scope of services for the PD&E Study.

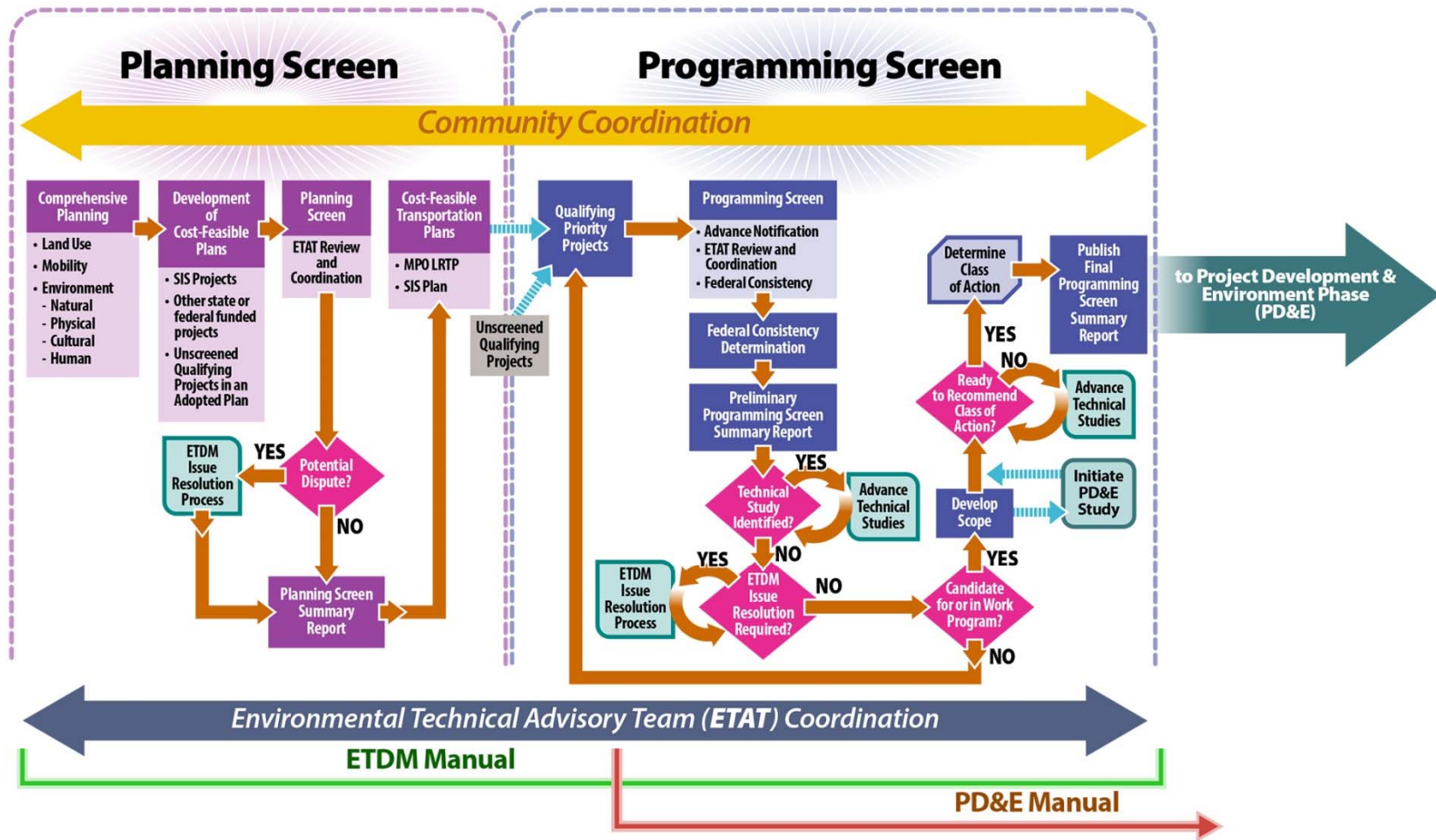


Figure 0-1: ETDM Process Diagram

## 2.2 TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

The ETDM process supports the transportation Planning phase by providing opportunities for consideration of potential environmental effects. In order to provide the context for ETDM Planning and Programming Screens, this section summarizes Florida's transportation planning process and identifies the various plans from which qualifying ETDM projects may originate.

### 2.2.1 Overview

The planning process engages civic leaders, businesses, and citizens. It provides information and strategies to help guide future development, deal with community problems, promote public health and safety, and protect natural, physical, cultural, and community (including social and economic) resources. A driving force for FDOT projects is the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), which is composed of goals and objectives that provide the framework for planning decisions in the state including local comprehensive planning. In Florida, the local comprehensive plan is a community's legally binding vision for its future which includes a transportation element that helps advance transportation priorities. Under **Chapter 163, Florida Statutes (F.S.)**, each local government must maintain a local comprehensive plan to guide future economic, social, physical, natural, and fiscal development of the area. At a minimum, these comprehensive plans address the following elements (**Section 163.3177, F.S.**):

- Future Land Use
- Transportation
- General sanitary sewer, solid waste, drainage, potable water, and natural groundwater aquifer recharge
- Conservation, use, and protection of natural resources
- Recreation and open space
- Housing
- Coastal management (if applicable)
- Intergovernmental coordination

Transportation planning begins with the community vision and develops strategies for addressing mobility in such a way as to advance the area's long-term goals. It is a cooperative process encouraging involvement by system users such as the business community, community groups, environmental organizations, the traveling public, freight operators, and the general public. **Figure 2-2** illustrates the transportation planning process (USDOT, 2015). Activities involved in transportation planning include:



- Monitoring existing conditions
- Forecasting future population and employment growth, including assessing projected land uses in the region and identifying major growth corridors
- Identifying current and projected future transportation problems and needs and analyzing, through detailed planning studies, various transportation improvement strategies to address those needs
- Developing long-range plans and short-range programs of alternative capital improvement and operational strategies for moving people and goods
- Estimating the impact of recommended future improvements to the transportation system on environmental resources
- Developing a financial plan for securing sufficient revenues to cover the costs of implementing strategies

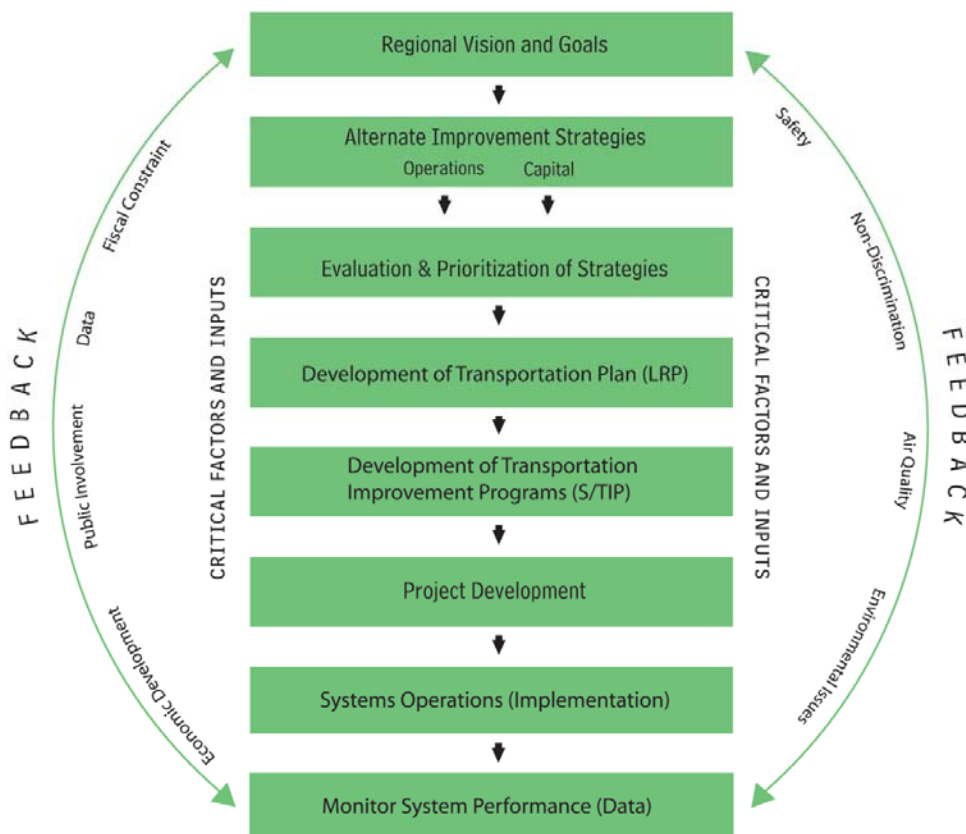


Figure 0-2: Transportation Planning Process (USDOT, 2015)

Planning activities result in the identification of project priorities to address future transportation needs. These can be identified in the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Plan,

a MPO/TPO LRTP, or other long-range planning documents. As funding sources are identified, priority projects are advanced into the implementation phases through the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and in MPO areas, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The FDOT Five Year Work Program schedules the implementation plan for these projects, as described in **Section 339.135, Florida Statutes**.

## 2.2.2 Transportation Planning Agencies

Transportation planning in Florida is a cooperative process that involves various levels of government, users of the transportation system, and the private sector.

Counties and municipalities are responsible for planning, building, and maintaining local road systems. Local governments are also responsible for most public transit systems, airports, and seaports, either directly or in conjunction with special authorities created to manage and provide services.

FDOT is responsible for planning, operating, and maintaining the State Highway System (SHS). The department is also responsible for the SIS, which consists of corridors, facilities, and services of statewide and interregional importance. FDOT also assists local governments, metropolitan and regional agencies and the private sector in providing public transit, aviation, rail, seaport, bicycle, pedestrian, and other transportation facilities and services. A number of these activities support freight initiatives.

To support these activities, FDOT prepares and maintains the FTP. Statewide modal plans maintained by FDOT include the Transit Strategic Plan, Florida Aviation System Plan, Seaport Plan, and State Rail Plan. FDOT maintains the SIS Plan to help guide future investments in, and the management of, the SIS. FDOT also annually adopts the STIP, and a Five Year Work Program.

Every urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 persons must have a designated MPO for transportation projects to qualify for FHWA or Federal Transit Agency (FTA) assistance (**23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 450.310(a)**). MPOs are transportation policy-making bodies made up of representatives from local government and transportation agencies with authority and responsibility in the metropolitan planning areas. The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) depends on the MPOs to ensure that federally-funded transit and highway projects are products of a certified planning process. Within an MPO area, USDOT will not approve federal funding for urban highway or transit projects unless they are in the MPO's plan. Each MPO is responsible for developing a LRTP, TIP, and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). For more information about Florida's MPOs, refer to the [\*\*FDOT MPO Program Management Handbook\*\*](#).

USDOT oversees the formulation of national transportation policy. It also provides financial and technical support to state and local governments in the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of federal transportation systems.

These transportation agencies must conduct their planning activities cooperatively in order to support the entire transportation system. In metropolitan areas, the MPO is responsible for actively seeking the participation of all relevant agencies and stakeholders in the planning process; similarly, FDOT is responsible for activities outside metropolitan areas. The MPOs and FDOT also work together. For example, each FDOT District has an MPO Liaison who works with the MPOs within their geographic area to coordinate activities.

Pursuant to **23 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 135**, FDOT has a documented process for consulting with non-metropolitan local officials during development of the long range statewide transportation plan (LRSTP) and the STIP. Additional requirements for consulting with non-metropolitan local officials are included in **23 CFR Part 450**. Accordingly, FDOT coordinates its statewide transportation planning process, including the STIP, with planning activities in non-metropolitan areas and considers the concerns of local elected officials representing units of general-purpose local government. FDOT confers with identified parties in non-metropolitan areas, in accordance with established processes, considers their views, and periodically informs the parties about actions taken. [Florida's Consultative Planning Process for Non-metropolitan Areas](#) is available on the Office of Policy Planning website (<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/policy/ruralsupport/>).

### 2.2.3 Key Planning Documents

As illustrated in **Table 2-1**, there are four key documents produced by the federal transportation planning process. These are augmented by state required documents as described below.

Table 0-1: Key Planning Products

| Document | Who Develops? | Who Approves?      | Time/ Horizon        | Contents   | Update Requirements  | ETDM Screening   |
|----------|---------------|--------------------|----------------------|--|--|--|
| FTP      | FDOT          | Governor/<br>FDOT  | At least<br>20 Years | Future Goals,<br>Strategies  | Not specified  | Not specified  |
| L RTP    | MPO/TPO       | MPO/TPO            | 20 Years             | Future Goals,<br>Strategies and<br>Projects (including<br>cost feasible element) | Every 5 Years (4<br>years for non-<br>attainment and<br>maintenance areas) | Qualifying Projects:<br>Planning Screen for<br>cost feasible element |
| STIP     | FDOT          | Governor/<br>USDOT | 4 Years              | Transportation<br>Investments  | Annually   | Qualifying Priority<br>Projects:<br>Programming Screen               |
| TIP      | MPO/TPO       | MPO/<br>Governor   | 5 Years              | Transportation<br>Investments  | Annually   | Qualifying Priority<br>Projects:<br>Programming Screen               |

The FTP is the official, statewide, multimodal, transportation plan covering a period of no less than 20 years (**23 CFR § 450.214**). The 2060 FTP is Florida's current long-range statewide plan. It outlines the transportation needs, policies, and strategies for the state of Florida over the next 50 years. The FTP contains both the short- and long-term

goals and objectives designed to anticipate future conditions and meet area transportation needs.

The LRTP is the transportation plan of a MPO/TPO which addresses no less than a 20-year planning horizon and includes both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system facilitating safe and efficient movement of people and goods (**23 CFR § 450.322(a)(b)**). The LRTP is reviewed and updated every five years to confirm the transportation plan's validity and consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use trends and conditions and to extend the 20-year planning horizon (**23 CFR § 450.322(c)**). Priority, qualifying projects identified for inclusion or already included in the cost feasible (fiscally constrained) element of the LRTP, should complete an ETDM Planning Screen. For projects developed using the Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) process, complete an ETDM Planning Screen as early as possible (see **Chapter 3, Section 3.6** of this **Manual** for information about the ACE process during the Planning Screen).

The TIP, required by **Section 339.175(8)(c), F.S.**, lists priority transportation projects covering a period of five years. It is developed and formally adopted by a MPO/TPO as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process, is consistent with the metropolitan transportation plan, and is required for projects to be eligible for funding under **Title 23 U.S.C. § 134** and **49 U.S.C. Chapter 53**. The first four years of the TIP are incorporated into the federally required TIP, with the fifth year included as informational for USDOT purposes (**23 CFR § 450.324(a)**). To develop the TIP, the MPO/TPO solicits project requests from agencies responsible for providing transportation services and facilities, cooperatively ranking them, and selecting the highest priority projects that will fit into the estimated available funding. Priority, qualifying projects complete an ETDM Programming Screen which aids in the development of the scope of services for the PD&E Study. For projects initiating the ACE process at the Programming Screen, complete an ETDM Programming Screen as early as possible.

A STIP is a statewide prioritized listing/program of transportation projects covering a period of four years that is consistent with the FTP and both LRTPs and TIPs in MPO/TPO areas [required for projects to be eligible for funding under **Title 23 U.S.C. § 134 Chapters 1-6** and **Title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 (23 CFR § 450.200)**]. For metropolitan planning areas, the STIP incorporates the TIP developed by the MPO (**23 CFR § 450.216(e)**). Priority, qualifying projects should complete an ETDM Programming Screen to aid in the development of the scope of services for the PD&E Study. For projects initiating the ACE process at the programming screen, complete an ETDM Programming Screen as early as possible.

Another MPO/TPO plan, the UPWP, refers to a statement of work identifying the planning priorities and activities to be carried out within a metropolitan planning area for a two-year period. Typically this plan is not used as the basis for identifying projects to complete various screening events. However, it does relate to the other MPO/TPO plans. At a minimum, an UPWP includes a description of the planning work and

resulting products, who will perform the work, time frames for completing the work, the cost of the work, and the source(s) of funds (**23 CFR § 450.104**).

As required by **Chapters 338 and 339, F.S.**, FDOT annually develops and adopts a Five Year Work Program listing the schedule of specific projects and services planned by FDOT. It includes projects from the STIP, MPO/TPO TIPs, and Priority Lists of non-MPO/TPO areas. The first four years of the Five Year Work Program are incorporated into the federally required STIP. For more information about including planning activities in the Five Year Work Program, refer to [FDOT Work Program Instructions, Part III, Chapter 23, Planning](#).

## 2.2.4 Plan Consistency

As a project proceeds to the PD&E phase, it must be included in the appropriate plans and programs before receiving federal approval for its Environmental Document. Projects in MPO/TPO areas must be described in their LRTP and TIP. This may require early coordination with the MPO should an amendment to the LRTP be needed, and this effort should be incorporated into the project schedule. Projects in non-MPO areas must be included into the STIP. The PD&E project team should coordinate with FDOT District MPO/TPO or Rural County Liaisons and either MPO/TPO or local government planning staff to compile and complete consistency information. The FDOT Office of Policy Planning provides guidance about plan consistency on their website at:

<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/policy/metrosupport/>.

FHWA provides clarification about transportation planning requirements and their relationship to **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** Process completion on their website at: [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/tpr\\_and\\_nepa/supplementmemo.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/tpr_and_nepa/supplementmemo.cfm).

## 2.3 SCREENING PROJECTS

This section describes the general process for screening ETDM projects, including project preparation, review, and post-review tasks. More details about the Planning and Programming Screens are described in **Chapters 3 and 4**, respectively.

### 2.3.1 Identifying Qualifying Projects

ETDM projects may originate from a variety of FDOT, MPO/TPO, or local government programs and plans, such as:

- SIS Cost Feasible Plan
- Statewide Bridge Replacement Program
- Transportation Needs Plans
- Master Plans

- Action Plans
- Corridor Plans
- TIPs
- LRTP
- Local Government Comprehensive Plans
- Capital Improvement Programs
- Priority Lists

The project sponsor (FDOT or MPO/TPO) selects qualifying projects and then enters project information into the EST. The ETDM process applies to certain types of state and federal transportation projects that meet additional conditions described in this section. To determine whether a project must complete the ETDM process, the project sponsor first considers the project type. Qualifying project types include:

- Roadway Projects
  - Additional through lanes which add capacity to an existing road
  - A new roadway, freeway or expressway
  - A highway which provides new access to an area
  - A new or reconstructed arterial highway (e.g., realignment)
  - A new circumferential or belt highway that bypasses a community
  - Addition of interchanges or major interchange modifications to a completed freeway or expressway (based on coordination with FHWA)
  - A new bridge which provides new access to an area, bridge replacements
- Public Transportation
  - Major capital improvements, including Intermodal Centers, Rail, and Transit Centers
  - Rail - new commuter rail, passenger rail, or new freight rail extending beyond current footprint
  - Transit - new facility, new terminal, New Start/Small Start project extending beyond current footprint

- A new seaport, airport, or non-passenger rail project on the SIS

After determining the qualifying project type, the project sponsor uses the ***ETDM Screening Matrix for Qualifying Projects***, shown in ***Table 2-2***, to consider whether screening is required based on the transportation system, potential funding source(s), and the responsible agency (i.e., the agency required to meet federal, state, and other applicable requirements). Generally, qualifying SHS and SIS projects must complete the ETDM process when FDOT is the responsible agency, as do most other qualifying projects using federal or state funds (or requiring a federal authorization). The ETDM process is either a local option or not applicable when qualifying projects are using only local funds, or if a local, non-FDOT entity is the responsible agency. In this discussion, “local” applies to any local government agency, other state agency, expressway or bridge authority, or private entity. Where “Local and FDOT” is referenced in ***Table 2-2***, coordination should occur between the local agency and FDOT as the project advances.

Note that qualifying Local Agency Program (LAP) projects follow the ETDM process because they are funded with federal dollars, which necessitates FDOT oversight. For a project to be part of the LAP, federal funds must already be programmed in the Five Year Work Program. Refer to the [\*\*\*FDOT LAP Manual\*\*\*](#) for more information about LAP projects.

Table 0-2: ETDM Screening Matrix for Qualifying Projects

|   | Federal Dollars (any FHWA, FTA or FRA funds or federal authorization) |                  | State Dollars (TRIP, Transit/ Intermodal System Grants, etc) No Federal Dollars Involved |                | Local Dollars Only |                |
|---|---|------------------|--|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
|   | Responsible Agency  | ETDM Screening   | Responsible Agency   | ETDM Screening | Responsible Agency | ETDM Screening |
| <b>System</b>   |   |                  |  |                |                    |                |
| Highways on the State Highway System (SHS) and on the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS)   | FDOT  | YES<br>FDOT Lead | FDOT   | YES            | FDOT               | YES            |
|   | Local   |                  | Local and FDOT   | Local Option   | Local and FDOT     | Local Option   |
| Highways on the SHS but not on the SIS  | FDOT  | YES<br>FDOT Lead | FDOT   | YES            | FDOT               | YES            |
|   | Local   |                  | Local and FDOT   | Local Option   | Local and FDOT     | Local Option   |
| Highways not on SHS but on the SIS  | FDOT  | YES<br>FDOT Lead | FDOT   | YES            | FDOT               | YES            |
|   | Local   |                  | Local and FDOT   | Local Option   | Local and FDOT     | Local Option   |
| Highways not on SHS nor on the SIS  | FDOT  | YES<br>FDOT Lead | FDOT   | YES            | Local              | N/A            |
|   | Local   |                  | Local  | Local Option   |                    |                |
| Major Transit Projects (new fixed guideway, New Starts) or Major Freight Projects   | FDOT  | YES              | FDOT   | YES            | Local              | N/A            |
|   | Local   | Local Option     | Local  | Local Option   |                    |                |
| <b>NOTE:</b> Local applies to any local government agency, other state agency, expressway authority, bridge authority or private entity |   |                  |  |                |                    |                |

**Sections 2.3.1.1 and 2.3.1.2** below provide specific guidance on how to further apply the selection criteria for a Planning or Programming Screen. If there are any questions regarding whether a project should or should not be screened, please contact the State Environmental Management Office (SEMO) to discuss the project details.

### 2.3.1.1 Additional Planning Screen Criteria

Only unscreened qualifying projects in or expected to be included in a Cost Feasible Plan undergo a Planning Screen. Ideally, all Planning Screens should follow the formulation of the Needs Plan and be completed before final approval of the LRTP, with highest priority projects being screened first. Usually, local government priority projects in non-MPO areas and qualifying bridge projects do not complete a Planning Screen. However, a Planning



Screen may be conducted for these projects at the discretion of the District, depending on the nature of the project and whether they qualify for screening.

FDOT is responsible for screening all qualifying SHS, SIS, and non-MPO/TPO qualifying priority projects. The MPO/TPO is responsible for screening qualifying MPO/TPO projects in their jurisdiction.

### **2.3.1.2 Additional Programming Screen Criteria**

In preparation of the STIP, a MPO/TPO TIP, or a Priority List of a county or municipality, MPO/TPO and FDOT ETDM Coordinators work with appropriate MPO/TPO, FDOT District, and other local government staff to identify qualifying projects to screen from transportation plans. This includes staff responsible for coordinating with planning agencies, managing project planning or development, and others who may have information to assist with the decision-making process. Depending on the organization, this task may involve personnel such as Planning Managers, MPO/TPO/Rural County Liaisons, PD&E Project Managers, planners, and environmental specialists.

A Programming Screen is required for all qualifying projects that will be included in the Five Year Work Program or those that are in the Five Year Work Program but have not started the PD&E phase. The Five Year Work Program is a schedule of specific transportation projects and services that will be provided during a five-year period. Transportation projects are selected annually for inclusion in the Five Year Work Program. It identifies:

- Which projects and services will be provided during the relevant five-year period,
- When and where such projects and services will be provided, and
- How these projects and services will be funded using available revenue.

The Five Year Work Program, required by **Chapters 338 and 339, F.S.**, is developed by the FDOT Central Office from the work programs of the FDOT Districts and Turnpike, drawing projects from MPO/TPO TIPs, local government Priority Lists, and various FDOT programs. The FDOT Work Program responds to the MPO TIP priority lists, i.e., their priorities are considered for inclusion in the work program. The MPO TIP then incorporates the projects from the adopted FDOT Work Program. The Five Year Work Program is published annually by the Office of Work Program and is fully described in the [\*\*FDOT Work Program Instructions\*\*](#).

Before selecting projects for the Five Year Work Program, FDOT (in conjunction with MPOs, as appropriate) should set sufficient time horizons in their project schedules to allow for a Programming Screen on all qualifying projects.

Only unscreened qualifying projects in or expected to move forward into the Five Year Work Program undergo a Programming Screen. This may include projects previously reviewed in a Planning Screen, as well as those not typically reviewed in a Planning Screen, such as

bridge replacement projects or projects resulting from amendments to adopted transportation plans. Programming Screens should be performed before development of the project scope of services to assist in identifying the activities to be completed during the PD&E Study. Ideally, Programming Screens should occur before the PD&E Study enters the Five Year Work Program, with highest priority projects being screened first or before the start of the PD&E phase. This does not imply that the PD&E Study can only be placed in the fifth year. Rather, projects that complete a Programming Screen should be able to be prioritized in such a manner that the PD&E phase can be programmed earlier. For example, it may be possible to program the PD&E Study in Years 1, 2, or 3, with subsequent phase(s) in Years 4 or 5. Refer to [FDOT Work Program Instructions, Part III, Chapter 23, Planning](#), for details. The scope of a project and its priority ultimately dictate how it is programmed.

### **2.3.2 State-Wide Acceleration and Transformation (SWAT)**

Each year, State-Wide Acceleration and Transformation (SWAT) teams meet in the FDOT Districts to decide which projects are good candidates for state funded only and consider the project management approaches to inform development of Scopes of Services and schedules for all PD&E studies. The SWAT team members typically include representatives from Work program, Intermodal Systems Development (ISD)/Planning, Environmental Management Office (EMO), and Design staff. The planning meeting may include other staff experts or SEMO staff at the request of the District SWAT team. These participants are experts who ensure that project decisions get broad input and early buy in and benefit of experience in various disciplines. The SWAT team communicates frequently with the ETDM Coordinator, who may either be a standing District SWAT member or drawn upon as a resource to advance early project activities. The ETDM Coordinator will be advised of whether the project will advance with state funds or FHWA funds, collaborated with to assure ETDM screening events are run prior to PD&E Study Advertisement and coordinated with regarding content, comments and responses of the screening events which assist in schedule and scope of services development.

See *PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 10, State, Local, or Privately Funded Project Delivery* and [FDOT Quick Guide: Transforming our State Pre-Construction Process](#) for more information about the state pre-construction process.

### **2.3.3 Federal Involvement**

Prior to starting an ETAT review, the project team updates the project information in the EST to indicate the level of federal involvement by identifying the following:

- State or FHWA Environmental Review Process
- State or Federal Funding
- Federal Permits

Certain ETDM projects must follow the FHWA environmental process:

- On Interstate
- Using or involving Interstate right-of-way (e.g., air rights, adjacent, etc.)
- Projects within and impacting federal lands such as National Parks or Forests, etc.
- FHWA funds are expected to be on the project (includes any phase of project development or implementation)

Refer to [\*\*FDOT Work Program Instructions, Part III, Chapter 25, PD&E\*\*](#), for detailed criteria.

When the project team identifies that only state funds will be allocated for delivery of the project, they must also flag the project within the Work Program database as Not Federal Eligible (NFE). These projects must follow the state environmental review process. FDOT must be the lead agency and the Environmental Document must be a State Environmental Impact Report (SEIR).

Projects may still follow the **NEPA** process if a federal permit is required, even though FHWA will not be the lead federal agency. Coordination with the permitting agency is required to develop an appropriate environmental document supporting their decision making process.

### **2.3.4 Programming ETDM Activities for Funding**

ETDM activities support planning decisions and are considered planning-level activities. Therefore, ETDM activities should be programmed for funding as planning projects, separate from PD&E activities for a specific project. ETDM activities may include, but are not limited to, preparation for completion of or further coordination or activities supporting ETDM Planning or Programming Screens, Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) activities, and advancement of technical or feasibility studies prior to a PD&E Study. This applies to consultant services or in-house costs to specifically perform and support the ETDM Planning and Programming Screens. FDOT has flexibility to determine the best source of funds to cover ETDM activities. Funds may be placed in a districtwide reserve box specifically for advanced activities; or the District may identify funds in other districtwide consultant contract boxes sufficient to cover the related ETDM tasks. For detailed instructions, see [\*\*FDOT Work Program Instructions, Part III, Chapter 23, Planning, Section A.4, Efficient Transportation Decision Making \(ETDM\)\*\*](#).

### **2.3.5 Project Screening Release Schedule**

Based on the list of projects selected for Planning or Programming Screens, FDOT ETDM Coordinators and Project Managers work with appropriate staff to develop a 12-month ETDM Screening schedule. The schedule identifies projects, the type of screening, and the

anticipated screening release date for each project. Projects undergoing the ACE process should also be identified because they require additional activities, as discussed in **Chapters 3 and 4** of this *Manual*.

FDOT tracks ETDM work as part of the FDOT Production Schedule. The project team should work with project schedulers to use the required Project Schedule and Management (PSM) codes listed in **Table 2-3** for ETDM screening activities.

Table 0-3: ETDM Project Schedule and Management (PSM) Codes

| PSM Code | Activity to Track                                     | Description                                      |
|----------|---|--|
| 700      | ETDM/ETAT PROGRAMMING SCREEN START                    | ENTER START DATE FOR SCREENING EVENT             |
| 701      | ETDM PROGRAMMING PRELIMINARY SUMMARY REPORT PUBLISHED | ENTER DATE FOR PRELIM PROGRAMMING SCREEN PUBLISH |
| 702      | ETDM PROGRAMMING FINAL SUMMARY REPORT PUBLISHED       | ENTER DATE FOR FINAL PROGRAMMING SCREEN PUBLISH  |

The schedule should be made available to the ETAT on the EST ETDM Calendar and updated as needed. FDOT Districts are encouraged to hold annual ETAT meetings (or web meetings) to discuss project specifics, release schedules, and program objectives. As changes occur to the list of projects or schedules, the FDOT ETDM Coordinators update the screening release schedule on the EST ETDM Calendar. Refer to the [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#) for instructions.

It is important to ensure the ETAT has enough time to review and provide comments. Therefore, it is recommended that no more than two projects be released at a time, and that project releases be scheduled at least two weeks apart. In addition, four months should be allowed per project to provide time for reviews, public involvement activities, possible review extensions, and preparation of the **Summary Report**. During the development of the project screening release schedule, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator should collaborate with other Districts to ensure consideration of their needs, plan adoption dates, work program deadlines, and the workload of ETAT members who may be assigned to multiple FDOT Districts.

### 2.3.6 Planning Screen

In preparation of adopting the Cost Feasible Plans, MPO/TPO and FDOT ETDM Coordinators work with the SWAT Team and other FDOT, MPO/TPO, or local government personnel to identify qualifying projects as described above.

Prior to initiating the Planning Screen review, the purpose and need, project description, Preliminary Environmental Discussion (PED), and logical termini for the project are added to the EST based on information from and in coordination with the applicable Planning office. During the 45-day project review period, ETAT members review a project's purpose and

need and provide comments about potential project effects to the natural, physical, cultural, and community resources related to their statutory and regulatory authority. ETAT members provide comments about a proposed project based on their expertise, respective agency authority, plans, programs, and technical reports. Commentary should reflect understanding of context and intensity of potential involvement with a resource based upon the proposed activities. The PED should be prepared in a way that assists the ETAT in this understanding. Early input received during the Planning Screen enables the transportation planners to:

- Refine the initial project concept
- Refine the project's purpose and need
- Identify potential avoidance, minimization, or mitigation opportunities
- Improve project cost estimates
- Consider resource management plans and community values
- Advance technical studies, if appropriate

Following the project review, the ETDM Coordinator should discuss and review ETAT responses with the District Environmental Administrator and Project Manager to be aware of initial comment, have the opportunity for additional clarification with individual ETAT members if needed, and prepare FDOT responses to ETAT commentary. Once internal review is complete, the ETDM coordinator publishes the **Planning Screen Summary Report**. This report serves as feedback to the ETAT members and summarizes key recommendations and results from the screening event. The FDOT also has opportunity to advance studies or analysis to support the Programming Screen. It can assist with subsequent interagency dialogue and aid in the development of LRTPs, Priority Lists, and the SIS Plan. The **Planning Screen Summary Report** includes a summary of ETAT member commentary identifying potential environmental issues and considerations for advancing the project. It also provides information about how FDOT or the MPO/TPO will address issues identified during the Planning Screen review. It additionally documents information from earlier studies and community outreach activities, which would support subsequent phases.

For certain projects, such as new alignments, the ACE process may begin during the Planning Screen. The ACE process provides FDOT with a consistent, documented method for corridor evaluation. Working with ETAT members and the Lead Agency (defined in **Section 2.5**), FDOT Districts establish methodologies to help identify reasonable alternatives for detailed analysis in the PD&E phase. With concurrence from the Lead Agency, these decisions may be carried forward into subsequent **NEPA** documents.

For more information about initiating the ACE process during the Planning Screen, see **Chapter 3, Section 3.6**, of this **Manual**.

### 2.3.7 Programming Screen

The Programming Screen builds upon the information produced during the Planning Screen, if applicable (not all projects complete a Planning Screen). The Programming Screen is required for all qualifying projects (defined in **Section 2.3.1**) being considered for inclusion in FDOT's Five Year Work Program, or prior to initiation of the PD&E Study. The Programming Screen begins FDOT's scoping process for the PD&E phase. Scoping is "an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action" (**40 CFR § 1501.7**). Programming Screens should be performed before creating the project scope of services so the screening results can be considered during its development.

During the Programming Screen, ETAT representatives provide technical assistance, comments about potential project effects, acknowledge understanding or ask for clarification of the purpose and need, and assist FDOT in scoping technical studies necessary to satisfy the requirements of the PD&E phase.

FDOT uses the EST to notify agencies and stakeholders to proceed with their review. When applicable, the notice for the Programming Screen begins a 45-day comment period to allow for the distribution, discussion, and receipt of agency responses. Upon receipt of this notice, all ETAT representatives will review and comment on the information associated with the Programming Screen. FDOT evaluates the input received and uses it to advance or focus analysis prior to the PD&E phase (as appropriate), develop the scope of services for the PD&E Study, and assist in determining the appropriate Class of Action (COA) as described in the [\*\*PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 2, Environmental Class of Action Determination.\*\*](#) For ACE projects, the screening assists in narrowing the list of reasonable alternatives requiring detailed study during the PD&E phase.

At the end of the Programming Screen, the ETDM Coordinator publishes the **Preliminary Programming Screening Summary Report** to document the initial screening event and **Final Programming Screen Summary Report** when a class of action (COA) determination has been made. These reports serve as feedback to the ETAT members and document the results of the screening. The final report also supports development of a project's scope of work based on the ETAT reviews, considerations, and recommendations received during the screening and are intended to be adopted as a planning product for use in the **NEPA** process.

### 2.3.8 Advance Notification (AN) Process

FDOT uses the AN process to inform agencies and other interested parties of a proposed transportation action, conduct the Federal Consistency Review (as appropriate), and support project scoping **NEPA** or State Environmental Impact Reports (SEIR)]. This fulfills the project initiation notification as required by **Title 23 U.S.C.**, as amended. In addition, the AN may also provide notice of FDOT's intent to apply for federal aid on a project, initiating the Federal Consistency Review process as required by **15 CFR Part 930**.



FDOT distributes the AN package through the EST, or via a letter, as appropriate. Recipients of the AN package have 45 days to provide input about potential project effects, identify potential technical studies, and document the need for future agency or tribal involvement. The Florida State Clearinghouse (SCH) has another 15 days to review the Consistency Reviewer's comments in the EST. The SCH then submits a Federal Consistency Review determination with the Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP). The SCH also issues a notice of inconsistency (when applicable). The AN package may be distributed concurrently with the Programming Screen notification, or separately at any point after publishing the ***Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report***. See ***Chapter 4*** of this ***Manual***, and [\*\*\*PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 3, Preliminary Environmental Discussion and Advance Notification\*\*\*](#) for details about the AN process.

### 2.3.9 Rescreening Projects

In certain situations a project may need to go through the Programming Screen again. Rescreening should take place when the project has not moved into the PD&E Study and:

- It has been four years or longer since the previous Programming Screen review
- There is a change in project termini (expanded) and/or
- There is a change in project concept(s) (e.g., revised alignments, the addition of an interchange, etc.)

Examples of changes to the project concept to consider for rescreening may include:

- Editing line work (e.g., adding segments, deleting segments, splitting an alternative into multiple segments, and adding a new leg)
- Adding alternative modes (i.e., road, transit, pedestrian, rail, etc.)
- Changing the configuration (e.g., changing "Lanes Undivided" to "Lanes Divided", etc.)
- Changing the current or planned number of lanes
- Modifying the previously identified Needs Configuration

The project is not required to go back through the Programming Screen once the PD&E Study has been initiated. Coordinate with SEMO about project-specific questions.

### 2.3.10 Advancing to Project Development and Environment (PD&E)

During the PD&E phase, FDOT performs preliminary engineering, conducts environmental reviews and public involvement activities, and prepares necessary studies and reports as described in the [\*\*\*FDOT PD&E Manual\*\*\*](#). During this phase, FDOT develops alternatives,

evaluates potential impacts to natural, physical, cultural, and community resources, and documents compliance with federal and state environmental laws. ETAT members provide technical assistance upon request by FDOT. The COA determination dictates the type of environmental document prepared during the PD&E phase. Federal Environmental Documents are developed in compliance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing *NEPA* and **23 CFR Part 771**. See [PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 2](#) for more information about environmental COA determinations. For state, local, or privately funded transportation projects, see [PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 10](#).

The **Title 23 U.S.C.** provides authority for, and encourages the integration of, planning information and products into the *NEPA* process. Therefore, the results of the Programming Screen can be used to support the PD&E Study in the following ways:

- Provide the foundation for purpose and need
- Define the general travel corridor and/or general mode(s)
- Distribute the Advance Notification
- Provide early input from stakeholders about transportation project alternatives and, for Environmental Impact Statements (EISs), the elimination of unreasonable alternatives
- Provide planning-level consideration of potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects
- Identify mitigation opportunities
- Define the affected environment (existing conditions)
- Identify anticipated permits and technical studies
- Advance technical studies, if appropriate
- Identify the anticipated environmental COA

Recommendations made during Planning and Programming Screens are recorded in the EST, and published in the **Final Programming Screen Summary Report** for use in the PD&E phase. Generally, commitments are not made during the planning phase. However, if a commitment is made, the FDOT project team follows FDOT procedure [Project Commitment Tracking 700-011-035](#). At the completion of the PD&E phase, the Environmental Document is prepared, providing the environmental and engineering recommendations to guide final design. **Chapter 5** of this *Manual* describes the transition to the PD&E phase.



FDOT's *PD&E Manual* details the process and technical requirements for compliance with federal and state laws during the PD&E phase.

## 2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING TOOL

The State of Florida has developed a comprehensive digital database, the Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL), at the University of Florida's GeoPlan Center. The EST is a web application that uses FGDL data and provides for an interactive review of proposed transportation projects by ETAT members. Project team members and ETAT members access the EST through an internal secure site, which is password protected to allow updates to the database. Other stakeholders may view the information on the read-only ETDM Public Access Site (<https://etdmpub.fla-etat.org/est/>).

FDOT and the MPO/TPOs enter information into the EST to advance consideration of environmental effects on their qualifying transportation projects. ETAT representatives provide new and updated GIS data to the FGDL for use within the EST, as available.

The EST performs standardized GIS analyses and queries using information supplied by ETAT members and contained in the FGDL. Moreover, it:

- Integrates data pertinent to natural, physical, cultural, and community resources and transportation programs into a standardized format
- Analyzes GIS data within project buffers to support ETAT member commentary
- Provides a platform for dissemination of information among ETAT representatives and the public
- Provides storage and access to ETAT reviews

EST users receive automatic email announcements about the availability of new data or analyses, project review deadlines, and training opportunities. User guides, technical documents, program agreements, manuals, and handbooks related to the ETDM process are available within the EST Library to assist ETAT members. A staffed help desk is available during normal business hours to provide technical assistance. **Figure 2-3** schematically displays the concept for the EST.

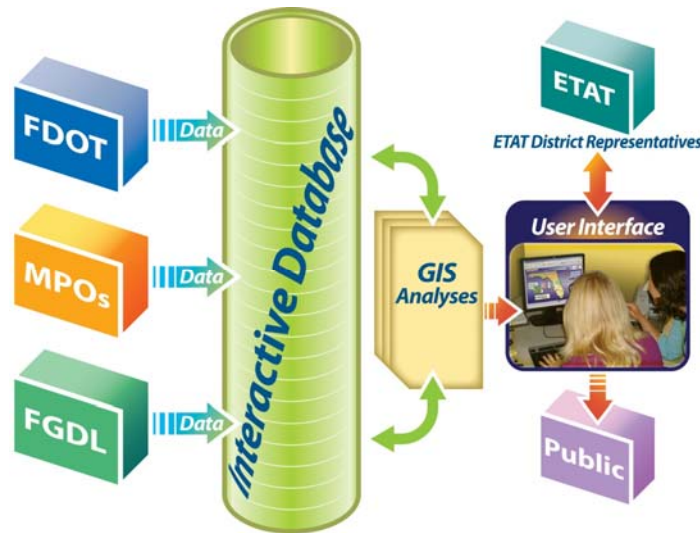


Figure 0-3: ETDM Database Technology Concept

The FDOT strives to improve the quality, consistency, and currency of data available for analysis through the EST. The responsibility for data acquisition and management is further described in **Chapter 6** of this *Manual*. For instructions on how to use the EST, refer to FDOT's [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#).

## 2.5 ETDM COORDINATION

Successful interaction between all entities and persons involved in the Planning and Programming Screens requires close coordination and teamwork. The EST facilitates communication and documents the results of the screening events. Additional interaction through interpersonal communication and team meetings helps to coordinate among FDOT, MPOs/TPOs, local governments, and ETAT members.

While the ETDM process requires interaction among a wide range of professionals involved in planning and project development processes, the responsibility for successful implementation rests with the following primary ETDM team members:

- PD&E Project Manager
- Environmental Administrator
- Project Development Engineer
- ETDM Coordinator
- Community Liaison Coordinator (CLC)
- State Environmental Management Office

- Environmental Permit Coordinator
- FDOT Planning and MPO/TPO Staff
- ETAT Members
- Lead Agency Representatives

These team members play a key role in the ETDM process by providing project information, program expertise, quality assurance, coordination, and recommendations to support the screening event or the decision-making process. The team is responsible for coordinating with District management in advancing ETDM activities, as appropriate. The FDOT District identifies the personnel, roles, and responsibilities for this team as appropriate to support the ETDM process implementation within the District. This can include assigning consultant support. FDOT Districts, MPO/TPOs, and ETAT agencies have flexibility and discretion on how activities are assigned and accomplished. For example, a task listed under the ETDM Coordinator may be performed by the PD&E Project Manager. The important point is that the activity is accomplished and the ETDM Coordinator, as administrator of the ETDM process, is able to coordinate and provide feedback and verify that the project advances through the process. The ETDM Coordinator should assure the Project Manager and District Environmental Administrator have the opportunity to review ETAT commentary as well as shape and review FDOT responses and the resulting summary report.

Other staff specialists, such as planners, engineers, SIS Coordinators, MPO/TPO/Rural County Liaisons, environmental specialists, and managers also play key roles in the ETDM process within FDOT and other ETAT member organizations. The FDOT and ETAT members are encouraged to identify personnel who will provide project information, support project development, or assist in the identification of potential project effects.

### **2.5.1 PD&E Project Manager**

The PD&E Project Manager executes and completes a project through the PD&E phase. This individual should be assigned during the Programming Screen and is the leader of the project team. When assigned, PD&E Project Managers have the same roles and responsibilities in the ETDM process as the ETDM Coordinator for the projects they manage.

Tasks performed by the PD&E Project Manager include, but are not limited to tasks listed below (also see ETDM Coordinator tasks listed in **Section 2.5.4**):

- Refining the project purpose and need, description, and spatial representation (geometry loaded and seen in the EST)
- Working with FDOT ETDM Coordinators and environmental specialists to determine the Summary Degrees of Effect (SDOEs)

- Working with the MPO/TPO or Rural County Liaisons and District planning offices to ensure consistency with applicable transportation plans
- Working with the ETAT and environmental specialists on specific issues and comments
- Participating in issue resolution
- Providing CLCs with comments identified or community outreach activities conducted
- Reviewing project information before being finalized and advanced by the ETDM Coordinator
- Working with FDOT ETDM Coordinators, environmental specialists, Project Development Engineers, and management to prepare scopes for PD&E phase technical studies and COA determinations
- Integrating review results and planning phase outcomes into PD&E documents
- Verifying that appropriate technical studies have been or are performed to address identified project issues

If the PD&E Project Manager is not assigned until the PD&E phase, the ETDM Coordinator and PD&E Project Manager meet to discuss the outcomes from the Planning and Programming Screens. For more information about PD&E Project Manager roles and responsibilities, refer to the [FDOT Project Management Handbook](#).

## 2.5.2 Environmental Administrator

The Environmental Administrators provide guidance, coordination, and decisions to support every aspect of the ETDM process and the PD&E phase. These responsibilities play a vital part in the effectiveness and efficiency of ETDM operations. Their roles include, but are not limited to:

- Providing guidance on the appropriate COA and scope of services for the PD&E Study
- Determining whether a non-federal transportation project should be classified as a State Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) or a Non-Major State Action (NMSA)
- Assisting, leading, or supporting activities identified under other roles
- Reviewing and approving (signing) Environmental Documents during PD&E
- Coordinating with District management

In some districts, these ETDM responsibilities are delegated to the Project Development Engineer.

### **2.5.3 Project Development Engineer**

The Project Development Engineer is responsible for the Project Development program and process in all FDOT Districts. This individual is often a key member of the ETDM team, working with the Project Manager, ETDM Coordinator, and other personnel on tasks such as:

- Identifying projects for screening
- Establishing a project screening schedule
- Coordinating with the lead agency to determine the COA
- Determining the need for technical studies, permits and scope of work, including public involvement, issue resolution, and quality assurance for PD&E Studies
- Coordinating with District management

### **2.5.4 ETDM Coordinator**

Each FDOT District, Turnpike, and MPO/TPO has a designated ETDM Coordinator. In general, the ETDM Coordinators are responsible for administering the ETDM process for their respective organizations. In conjunction with appropriate staff, they implement the ETDM process within their organizations.

In addition, the FDOT District ETDM Coordinators lead the ETAT for their geographic Districts. They may also conduct or coordinate ETDM training and provide technical assistance to other FDOT, MPO/TPO, local government, and ETAT members (consistent with statewide procedures and guidance).

The Turnpike ETDM Coordinator administers Turnpike projects through the ETDM process and coordinates with the geographic FDOT District office(s) where the projects are located. The ETATs for the geographic FDOT Districts also review Turnpike projects located in those areas.

MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinators work closely with their FDOT counterparts as qualifying MPO/TPO projects advance from the Planning phase to the PD&E phase. Ideally, the MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinator sponsors MPO/TPO projects during the Planning Screen. As projects advance to the Programming Screen, the FDOT District takes the lead while continuing to seek input from the MPO/TPO.

Key activities of the ETDM Coordinators are listed below. Unless otherwise specified, these activities apply to all three types of ETDM Coordinators for their respective projects. When a

Project Manager is assigned during a Planning or Programming Screen, the Project Manager can perform these activities for the specific project.

- Confirming timely information flow with CLCs, planners, environmental specialists, Project Managers, and other personnel within their organization who maintain information needed for the ETDM screens, participate in the project reviews, or use the results
- Working with appropriate staff to ensure timely exchange of project information from the MPO/TPOs and local governments to FDOT, as applicable
- Coordinating with appropriate management and staff to identify projects for screening and to establish a screening schedule
- Coordinating and working with the project team to perform quality assurance checks on information entered into the EST and ensuring accurate project information is entered into the EST, including project description, purpose and need, project GIS data, plan consistency, and schedules
- Coordinating with the appropriate planning staff or government liaisons to ensure the project is consistent with all relevant plans (i.e., STIP, TIP, LRTP)
- Identifying and uploading other relevant project information, such as planning studies, **Methodology Memorandum (MM)**, **Alternative Corridor Evaluation Report (ACER)**, etc.
- Engaging ETAT representatives to coordinate timely and meaningful reviews
- Verifying that ETAT representatives receive information about how project plans or concepts have been adapted to address their concerns, or communicating to the ETAT representatives the rationale for not incorporating their input
- Assisting with public involvement activities during the Planning and Programming Screens
- Coordinating sociocultural effects (SCE) evaluations with the CLC and identifying prior efforts which should be documented in the EST through assistance from local government or other FDOT or MPO/TPO staff
- Coordinating considerations for a system-wide cumulative effects evaluation, when applicable
- Monitoring preliminary ETAT responses and conducting personal communication to clarify issues or respond to questions

- Monitoring relevant ETAT commentary to identify actions necessary to advance the project
- Identifying actionable commentary from the ETAT and transmitting to the appropriate staff as the project advances
- Preparing summary reports in coordination with other personnel to document potential project issues, ETAT member and public commentary, and recommendations to address those issues, including assigning a SDOE to each category within the EST

In addition to the above activities, the following activities apply to FDOT District and Turnpike ETDM Coordinators:

- Coordinating the Issue Resolution process when applicable
- Ensuring ETDM group identifier is assigned per the [\*\*FDOT Work Program Instructions, Part III, Chapter 23\*\*](#)
- Providing summary reports to PD&E Project Managers and environmental specialists to support preparation of the scopes for PD&E phase technical studies
- Supporting FDOT Managers, the Project Development Engineer, and Project Manager with Lead Agency coordination to determine the COA for projects screened through the ETDM process
- Providing information from the Programming Screen to FDOT Environmental Permit Coordinators to support the permitting process
- Providing Programming Screen results to FDOT Project Managers to support coordination with the FDOT Work Program Administrator

### **2.5.5 Community Liaison Coordinator**

Each FDOT District, Turnpike, and MPO/TPO has a designated CLC. Specific titles for this person may vary (for example, SCE Coordinator), but the roles and responsibilities are generally those described herein for the CLC. The CLC, in conjunction with the ETDM Coordinator, analyzes potential community impacts during the Planning and Programming Screens. Also known as SCE evaluation, this includes consideration of potential social, economic, land use, mobility, aesthetics, and relocation effects. The FDOT CLC evaluates potential sociocultural effects for bridge replacement projects, SIS, SHS, and non-MPO/TPO priority projects.

During the Planning Screen, the MPO/TPO CLC has these responsibilities for projects not on the SIS or SHS in each MPO/TPO area. During the Programming Screen, the FDOT CLC performs the SCE evaluations on these projects with input from the MPO/TPO CLC.

The FDOT District CLCs, MPO/TPO CLCs, and District MPO Liaisons work closely to identify and implement public involvement activities in MPO/TPO areas, as needed. In rural areas, the FDOT District CLC works with appropriate District personnel, such as the Rural County Liaison or public involvement staff, to identify and implement applicable public involvement activities based on the nature of the project and potential for community impacts. In addition, the FDOT CLC interacts with the community or MPO/TPO to verify that identified community effects are addressed in a manner consistent with community values and desires, and FDOT standards and resources. The [Sociocultural Effects Program website](#) and [Public Involvement Handbook](#) describe practical applications and provide specific techniques to accomplish CLC activities. Ideally, the Socio-Cultural Effects Evaluation/FDOT commentary should be completed prior to ETAT Screening.

The following activities may apply to the FDOT District, Turnpike, or MPO/TPO CLCs as they work on their respective projects. See **Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6** of this **Manual** for additional information.

- Working with the ETDM Coordinator and/or other staff in their organizations to gather community information required for the SCE evaluation
- Developing appropriate level of activities in consideration of potential project impacts, scope, and description, as well as potential for controversy
- Working with FDOT, MPO/TPO, and local government staff to gather public comments collected in earlier outreach activities, and documenting a summary of these comments in the EST
- Coordinating with the ETDM Coordinator assigned to the project and other FDOT District, MPO/TPO, or local government staff to develop and update community information in the vicinity of planned projects, as needed
- Coordinating community outreach activities with the FDOT or MPO/TPO public information staff
- Conducting project SCE evaluations and entering results into the EST
- Working with appropriate staff in their organizations to communicate responses about transportation issues to the community during the Planning and Programming Screens
- Facilitating communication with community representatives regarding sociocultural effects in coordination with appropriate staff
- Monitoring and updating community coordination activities to improve effectiveness
- Recommending ways to resolve the community issues identified during SCE evaluations



- Updating the summary of public comments to include input received during the Planning and Programming Screens

### **2.5.6 State Environmental Management Office (SEMO)**

SEMO management and professional staff provide guidance, coordination, and support on every aspect of the ETDM process during the Planning phase as a link to advance projects to the PD&E phase. SEMO manages the ETDM program, the EST, the interagency agreements, statewide interagency coordination, and provides policy guidance, technical assistance, and training.

SEMO roles during ETDM include, but are not limited to:

- Developing and updating FDOT policies and procedures
- Coordinating with other functional areas within the Department
- Communicating and coordinating program activities with ETAT agencies
- Managing ETAT agency agreements
- Providing guidance and technical support
- Maintaining the ETDM Manual chapters and other supporting documents
- Conducting training
- Coordinating with District and central office staff to perform quality assurance checks on information in the EST
- Managing the ETDM performance management program, including the FDOT Quality Assurance Plan
- Managing the ETDM Help Desk
- Maintaining and enhancing the EST

### **2.5.7 Environmental Permit Coordinator**

The involvement of the Environmental Permit Coordinator provides another important linkage between the Planning and Project Development phases in support of environmental permitting activities.

Environmental Permit Coordinator roles during ETDM may include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying anticipated permits

- Developing and reviewing ETAT responses provided during project screening
- Considering mitigation opportunities
- Coordinating with ETDM Coordinator, Environmental Administrator, and Project Manager, as assigned
- Assisting in the identification of technical studies
- Providing guidance and technical support
- Engaging in interagency coordination, as needed

### **2.5.8 Other FDOT and MPO/TPO Staff**

FDOT and MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinators and Project Managers may look to other FDOT and MPO/TPO staff for assistance. Below are several additional participants in the ETDM process and the tasks they may support:

- SIS Coordinators
  - Identifying projects for review
  - Ensuring consistency with applicable plans
  - Assisting in the development of project concepts, including project description and purpose and need
  - Working with the FDOT ETDM Coordinator and CLC on SCE evaluations
  - Helping to prepare summary reports, including responses and commitments and potential scope of work
- Planners:
  - Providing data from early studies to support reviewed projects
  - Assisting with data entry, quality assurance review, and summary report preparation
- MPO/TPO or Rural County Liaisons
  - Coordinating the exchange of project information between MPOs/TPOs or rural counties and Districts, including project consistency and prioritization information

- Working with MPOs/TPOs and local governments to ensure necessary plan amendments are conducted and approved by the overseeing Board prior to requesting Lead Agency signature on the Environmental Document
- Environmental Specialists
  - Providing data from early studies to support projects completing the ETDM process
  - Assisting with data entry [including Preliminary Environmental Discussion (PED)], quality assurance review, technical studies, and summary report preparation

### 2.5.9 Environmental Technical Advisory Team

An ETAT has been established for each of the seven geographic FDOT Districts. Each ETAT is composed of representatives from participating agencies and Native American Tribes. The ETAT representatives are appointed by their respective agency or tribal government. They are responsible for coordinating reviews and communicating to support the planning and development of transportation projects. Specific agency responsibilities are detailed in each respective Agency Operating Agreement (AOA).

The ETAT representatives review proposed transportation projects to identify potential issues; provide guidance for addressing these issues; assist in focusing future studies; and contribute information about the natural, physical, cultural, and community resources. The ETAT representatives maintain team communications on behalf of their organization and serve as points of contact from Planning through future project development phases (unless another contact is assigned).

The ETAT representatives have authority and responsibility to coordinate internally and provide comments on behalf of their organization. Communication within their organization may include coordination of statewide plans and initiatives. The ETAT representatives are expected to use all available information and sources to develop their comments. The ETAT representatives should contact FDOT with any questions that may enhance their understanding of the project and assist in developing comments about potential project effects to resources. The role of the ETAT representatives changes from commenting during the ETDM process to coordinating during the PD&E phase and to environmental permitting during the Design phase. Example ETAT representative roles are shown in **Table 2-4**.

Table 0-4: ETAT Representative Roles

| ETAT Typical Responsibilities   | Planning Screen | Programming Screen |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|
| Verify that resource data provided by the ETAT organization is current in the EST     | ✓               | ✓                  |
| Review and comment on project purpose and need – acknowledge understanding or ask for | ✓               | ✓                  |

| ETAT Typical Responsibilities  | Planning Screen | Programming Screen |
|--|-----------------|--------------------|
| clarification  |                 |                    |
| Review GIS analyses available in the EST   | ✓               | ✓                  |
| Review PED and AN, when available  | ✓               | ✓                  |
| Review other uploaded ancillary documents intended to support project review   | ✓               | ✓                  |
| Identify resources of concern and provide focused comments and actionable recommendations to avoid or minimize potential effects to jurisdictional resources.                    | ✓               | ✓                  |
| Evaluate whether identified resources can be eliminated from further detailed analysis during the PD&E Study   | ✓               | ✓                  |
| Identify potential avoidance, minimization, and mitigation opportunities   | ✓               | ✓                  |
| Coordinate with FDOT for clarification or discussion regarding potential project effects   | ✓               | ✓                  |
| Attend and participate in ETAT meetings and project coordination meetings  | ✓               | ✓                  |
| For scoping purposes, provide comments regarding cumulative effects to a resource and provide information for the Lead Agency's consideration when evaluating cumulative effects | ✓               | ✓                  |
| Identify potential permits and technical studies necessary to advance transportation projects  |                 | ✓                  |
| Review and comment on the Methodology Memorandum (MM) and Draft Alternatives Corridor Evaluation Report (ACER) during the Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) process          | ✓               | ✓                  |
| Make recommendations and provide technical assistance to FDOT to support future permit activities  |                 | ✓                  |
| Participate in interagency issue resolution teams, as applicable   | ✓               | ✓                  |

### 2.5.10 Lead Agency Representatives

The Lead Agency holds primary responsibility for the Environmental Document in the PD&E phase. FDOT is the Lead Agency for state projects. For federal projects, a federal agency will be the Lead Agency, and per **Title 23 U.S.C.**, FDOT will serve as the co-lead. For local projects (excluding LAP) the local agency may be the lead. FDOT identifies whether or not a project will be processed as a federal or state project during COA determination at the end of the Programming Screen. Potential Lead Agencies are identified during the Programming Screen to expedite the COA process. A potential Lead Federal Agency should be identified when federal funds will be used on any phase of a project or if FHWA, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), or FTA approval will be required. See **Chapter 4** of this **Manual** for more information about selecting the potential Lead Agency. The Lead Agency representative performs specific tasks in the ETDM process, including:

- Inform and coordinate with SEMO and District environmental offices on agency initiatives, programs, training opportunities, guidance, and rule changes that may impact FDOT

- Attend and participate in ETAT meetings and project coordination meetings, as appropriate
- Review and approve project purpose and need
- Review, comment and approve the Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) **Methodology Memorandum (MM)**
- Review and comment on the Draft **Alternative Corridor Evaluation Report (ACER)**
- Approve elimination of unreasonable alternatives not meeting the purpose and need or evaluated through application of the approved **MM** and documented in the **ACER**
- Invite Participating and/or Cooperating Agencies, as appropriate
- Review and approve the Class of Action (COA) for the federal Environmental Document development in the **NEPA** study
- Review and adopt planning products for use during **NEPA**
- Participate in interagency issue resolution teams, as applicable
- Perform agency-specific actions, reviews, and approvals during the ETDM Screenings as described in the AOA, including providing comments and recommendations regarding proposed transportation projects in the EST

FDOT uses the Lead Agency's responses, comments, and recommendations to support project scoping and to identify coordination needs or additional activities in future project phases.

## 2.6 ETAT REVIEW OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

During the Planning and Programming Screens, ETAT representatives review project information and provide comments about potential direct and indirect effects to resources under their jurisdiction. ETAT members are expected to provide specific comments to support decisions as the project advances through the project delivery process. They use the EST to access information and provide comments to FDOT. ETAT members are expected to supplement information in the EST with additional sources and personal knowledge. A few examples include historical documents that are not part of any electronic database, personal knowledge of an area, information from site visits, and direct coordination with the project sponsor (for example; phone calls, emails, and webinars).

During the Planning Screen, comments should provide information regarding agency plans, resource status, and identification of potentially critical issues. In the Programming Screen, the comments help to develop a project scope of services for future PD&E Studies. The

comments may also help to identify the range of reasonable alternatives by providing unique potential effect comments about each alternative, when more than one is presented. The ETAT representatives may also identify potential avoidance, minimization, and mitigation opportunities, if needed, and assist with permit application coordination.

At the conclusion of both the Planning Screen and the Programming Screen, the ETAT representative selects a Degree of Effect (DOE) for each alternative and issue. The summary reports document the ETAT recommendations for avoidance, minimization, or mitigation opportunities and supplemental technical studies that may be needed. This documentation is entered into the EST, as described in **Chapters 3** and **4** of this *Manual*, using EST procedures described in the [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#). ETAT comments recorded in the EST are also available to other ETAT representatives and to the public.

The ETAT representatives provide comments about potential effects to resources and issues identified in their AOA and/or in accordance with their regulatory authority. The following sections describe these ETDM issues and correlate to the detailed environmental analyses performed in the development of technical studies, which may be prepared during the PD&E phase (refer to the [PD&E Manual](#) for additional details). See **Chapter 3 Planning Screen** and **Chapter 4 Programming Screen** for more specific details about ETAT review tasks during the ETDM screening events.

### 2.6.1 Social and Economic

FDOT has a proactive policy and philosophy regarding the identification of sociocultural effects in project planning and development that accomplishes the following:

- Captures prior MPO/TPO SCE and public involvement information and includes it in the Planning and Programming Screens
- Identifies and addresses community issues during the decision-making process
- Avoids, minimizes and/or mitigates, where feasible, adverse community effects
- Considers environmental and community effects from the earliest stages of planning and project development
- Enhances participation and consultation of communities affected by proposed projects throughout the project development process
- Identifies conceptual design issues to promote livable communities

The ETDM process supports the identification and evaluation of potential sociocultural effects of qualifying transportation projects. It is the responsibility of the FDOT and MPO/TPO CLCs to identify potential effects of transportation actions on affected

communities. The issues considered and documented in the EST in support of a SCE evaluation include the following:

- *Aesthetic Effects*: Describe the area's existing aesthetic features and summarize the project's potential involvement (see [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 15: Aesthetic Effects](#)).
- *Economic*: Describe the known economic condition of the area, ongoing or planned economic development efforts, and the project's potential involvement (see [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 9: Sociocultural Effects Evaluation](#)).
- *Land Use Changes*: Describe existing and future land use in the project area and how the project may affect it (see [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 9: Sociocultural Effects Evaluation](#)).
- *Mobility*: Describe existing travel conditions, travel modes, existing and planned transit routes in the area. Describe the project's involvement with the movement of people, goods (e.g., freight), and services (see [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 9: Sociocultural Effects Evaluation](#)).
- *Relocation Potential*: Discuss the potential right-of-way needs for the project and whether relocations may be needed (see [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 9: Sociocultural Effects Evaluation](#)).
- *Social*: Consider the community demographics (age, income, minority populations, etc.), underserved populations/environmental justice concerns, community cohesion, safety/emergency response, community character, community goals, etc., and describe potential involvement with them, as appropriate (see [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 9: Sociocultural](#)).

The [Sociocultural Effects Program website](#) provides specific techniques for identifying, reviewing, and evaluating sociocultural effects. This website is available at <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/sce/sce1.shtm>.

Public involvement is an important part of the SCE evaluation process. The CLCs in cooperation with the FDOT PD&E Project Manager, and other staff (as needed) shall establish appropriate level of public involvement activities in consideration of potential project impacts, scope and description,

and potential for controversy. Interactive public participation is the key to effective public involvement and includes disseminating as well as receiving vital information. To identify the most appropriate effective public involvement techniques throughout the ETDM process, refer to the [Public Involvement Handbook](#), which provides guidance to implement the FDOT [Public Involvement Opportunities Procedure No. 000-525-050](#). This policy meets the requirements of **23 CFR § 450.212(a) and § 450.316(b)**. (The [Public Involvement Handbook](#) may be referenced at the FDOT SEMO website (<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/>).

***FDOT Public Involvement Opportunities***  
***(Procedure No. 000-525-050)***

The Florida Department of Transportation recognizes the importance of involving the public in information exchange when providing transportation facilities and services to best meet the state's transportation challenges. Therefore, it is the policy of the Florida Department of Transportation to promote public involvement opportunities and information exchange activities in all functional areas, using various techniques adapted to the local area conditions and project requirements.

In addition to the Social and Economic issues examined through the SCE evaluation, the Natural Resources Conservation Service considers potential effects on farmlands as follows:

- *Farmlands*: Describe farmlands in the project area and summarize their potential involvement (see [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 28: Farmland](#)).

## **2.6.2 Cultural and Tribal**

The ETDM process incorporates consideration of cultural resources into the transportation planning process by allowing for the identification of known archaeological sites and historic resources that are in proximity to a planned project. The process also allows for the evaluation of the likelihood of unrecorded resources within a project area. As ETAT members, the Florida Department of State - Division of Historical Resources/State Historic Preservation Officer (FDHR/SHPO) and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) provide comment on potential effects to cultural resources and interact with FDOT (and MPOs/TPOs, as applicable) during both the Planning and Programming Screens and PD&E phase.



Certain information in historic and cultural database systems is protected and not accessible to the public through the EST.

The ETDM process does not replace the **Section 106** process (defined in **36 CFR Part 800**) nor does it eliminate the need for a cultural resource assessment survey or other types of technical studies. Technical studies may also be recommended by the FDHR/SHPO or THPOs.

The ETDM cultural resource issues considered and documented during the ETDM process include:

### **Section 106 Process**

**Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act** requires federal agencies to consider the effects of projects they carry out, approve, or fund on historic properties. Additionally, federal agencies must provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment on such projects prior to the agency's decision on them. **Section 106** procedures are defined in **36 CFR Part 800 – Protection of Historic Properties**.

- *Historic and Archaeological Sites:* Within the vicinity of the proposed project, identify known sites listed or eligible for listing on the **National Register of Historic Places**. This includes, but is not limited to historic districts, objects, archaeological remains, and historic structures, including bridges. Describe the project's potential involvement and how cultural resources will be evaluated (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 12: Archaeological and Historic Resources](#)).
- *Recreation Areas:* Identify recreation areas, the project's potential involvement, and how they may be evaluated. It should be noted that for USDOT projects these properties may be potentially protected by **Section 4(f)** (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 13: Section 4\(f\) Evaluations](#)).
- *Section 4(f) Potential:* For USDOT projects, identify properties potentially protected by **Section 4(f)**. Also, identify public parks, publicly-owned recreation areas, and wildlife or waterfowl refuges located within the vicinity of the proposed project. Describe the potential involvement and how it may be evaluated in the PD&E phase (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 13: Section 4\(f\) Evaluations](#)).

With respect to Native American Tribal coordination, **Section 106** of the **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)**, and its implementing regulations, **36 CFR Part 800: Protection of Historic Properties** (effective January 11, 2001) require that federal agencies consult with federally recognized Native American Tribes in all phases of the **Section 106** process when an agency undertaking *may* have the potential to affect Native American historic properties on or off tribal lands. In recognition of the need that Native American issues and concerns be treated in a manner that is consistent with current federal and state legislation, the FDOT, in partnership with the FHWA Florida Division, initiated a government-to-government relationship with federally recognized Native American Tribes to ensure compliance with **Section 106**. Please

refer to the Native American Coordination website for the latest contacts, protocols, and guidance; located at:

<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/NA%20Website%20Files/Protocol.shtm>

### 2.6.3 Natural

The EST natural resource issues considered and evaluated in the Planning and Programming Screens include the following:

- *Coastal and Marine:* Identify Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) in the project vicinity and potential for involvement with managed species inhabiting, or migrating through, the project vicinity as required by the **Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA)**. Identify possible involvement with Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs). Describe how the project may affect EFH (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 11: Essential Fish Habitat](#)). Identify if the project is located in the vicinity of, or is located within, a coastal barrier resource as defined by the **Governor's Executive Order 81-105** and the **Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA)** (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 26: Coastal Barrier Resources](#)).
- *Floodplains:* State if the project is in the base floodplain or involves a regulated floodway, the project's potential involvement, and how they may be evaluated (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 24: Floodplains](#)).
- *Water Quality and Quantity:* Provide a brief description of existing stormwater treatment, the project's potential involvement, and how they may be evaluated. Identify if the project is located within a sole source aquifer, and provide the name of the aquifer (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 20: Water Quality](#)).
- *Wetlands and Surface Waters:* Discuss potential involvement with wetland and surface water resources. If known, identify the location of jurisdictional wetlands as determined by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), Water Management Districts, and/or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 18: Wetlands and other Surface Waters](#)).
- *Wildlife and Habitat:* Identify threatened and endangered species that may inhabit or migrate through the project corridor, designated critical habitat involved with the project, wildlife habitat for listed species, and describe the project's potential involvement, and how they may be evaluated (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 27: Wildlife and Habitat Impacts](#)).

### 2.6.4 Physical

The EST physical environment issues considered and evaluated during the Planning and Programming Screens include the following:

- *Air Quality*: Describe the air quality conformity designation of the project area. State if an air quality screening will occur (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 16: Air Quality Analysis](#)).
- *Contamination*: Identify by industry or commercial type known Hazardous Material Generators and/or potentially contaminated sites (i.e., petroleum) within the vicinity of the project. State whether a Contamination Screening Evaluation will be conducted for the project (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 22: Contamination Impacts](#)).
- *Infrastructure*: Provide a brief description of existing infrastructure (e.g., utilities, railroads, and transit), the project's potential involvement, and how it may be evaluated (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 10: Utilities and Railroads](#)).
- *Navigation*: Identify if the project intersects a potentially navigable waterway, the project's potential involvement, and how it may be evaluated.
- *Noise*: Identify potential noise sensitive sites within the vicinity of the project. Identify the likelihood of traffic noise impacts and if a noise study will be performed (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 17: Noise](#)).

## 2.6.5 Special Designations

ETAT representatives with jurisdiction over any of the resources listed below submit comments about potential involvement with these features through the EST Special Designations issue:

- Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW): Identify potential involvement with OFW (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 21: Outstanding Florida Waters](#)).
- Aquatic Preserves: Identify potential involvement with Aquatic preserves (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 19: Aquatic Preserves](#)).
- Scenic Highways: Identify, by formal name, designated or candidate Scenic Highways in the project vicinity and potential involvement (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 29: Scenic Highways](#)).
- Wild and Scenic Rivers: Identify potential involvement with rivers listed in the Nationwide Rivers Inventory including Wild and Scenic Rivers (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 23: Wild and Scenic Rivers](#)).

## 2.7 ETDM ISSUE RESOLUTION PROCESS

### 2.7.1 Overview

The ETDM Issue Resolution process seeks to find solutions to complex issues among agencies by identifying mutually agreeable activities or conditions that will address a resource concern (natural, physical, social or cultural) while meeting the transportation need. Issue resolution activities may continue through future project delivery phases as detailed analysis begins and more information becomes available. Participation in the ETDM process does not abrogate or limit an agency's authority or responsibility to protect resources over which it has jurisdiction or authority or require it to act in a way contrary to law, regulation, rules, policy or practice.

A strong commitment exists among the participants in the ETDM process to resolve issues within the ETAT, prior to elevating them to higher level management (see **Figure 2-4**). To facilitate meeting this commitment, potential disputes should be addressed as early as possible to make the best use of agency skills and resources. Projects with unresolved issues following the ETAT review and publication of the **Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report** require commencement or continuation of the ETDM issue resolution process.

Initially, the ETDM Coordinator works with the appropriate ETAT representative(s) to informally resolve the disputed issue(s) at the agency staff level before elevating the discussion to the Formal Issue Resolution process. The agency heads (or governing board, as applicable), will make the final decision on how to address unresolved issues.

Once resolved, the ETAT member who originally assigned the Dispute Resolution DOE can document concurrence by lowering the DOE (i.e., "Dispute Resolution" to "Substantial" or "Moderate") for the issue, and the FDOT ETDM Coordinator can do the same by lowering the SDOE and republishing the summary report. Alternatively, should all parties agree, the ETAT representative may decide to not modify the original DOE, and only have the FDOT ETDM Coordinator lower the SDOE. The FDOT ETDM Coordinator records activities and results in the Issue Resolution Log on the EST. The [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#) provides additional guidance on tracking and documenting the Issue Resolution process.

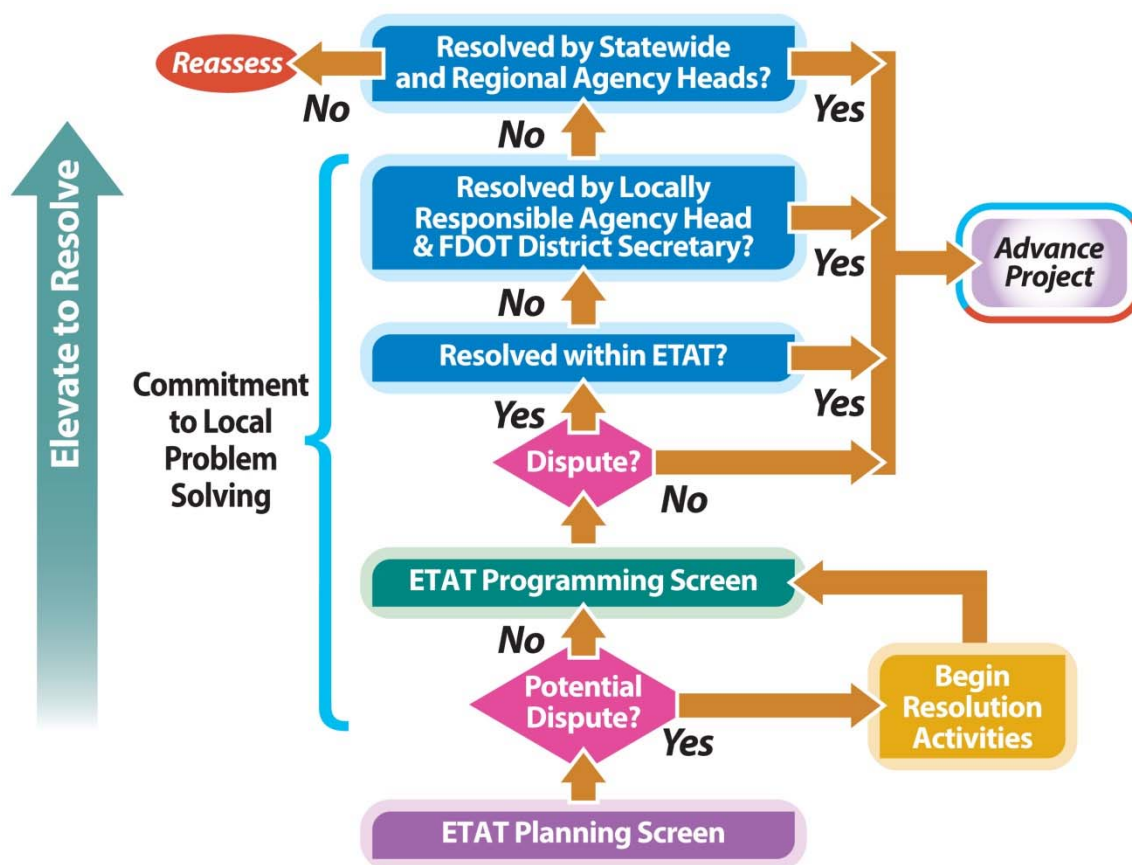


Figure 0-4: Issue Resolution Process

NOTE: Issue Resolution identifies mutually agreeable activities or conditions addressing a resource concern while meeting the transportation need. Issue resolution activities may continue through future project delivery phases

## 2.7.2 Initiating Issue Resolution

The informal issue resolution process begins when the FDOT ETDM Coordinator, in consultation with the Lead Agency, assigns a Potential Dispute SDOE in the Planning Screen or Dispute Resolution SDOE during a Programming Screen review. When assigning the SDOE, the ETDM Coordinator uses known information including comments and DOEs from ETAT members. The ETDM Coordinator reviews the ETAT commentary to determine its consistency with the definitions of Potential Dispute or Dispute Resolution, and in conjunction with the agency’s regulatory authority. For definitions, see **Chapter 3, Table 3-1, Potential Project Effects Degree of Effect Guidance – Planning Screen** or **Chapter 4, Table 4-1, Potential Project Effects Degree of Effect Guidance – Programming Screen**

An ETAT representative may, on its jurisdictional or regulatory authority, flag a project as potentially needing issue resolution with the following triggers:

1. Project is considered to be unpermittable (applicable to permitting agencies)

2. Project is identified to be contrary to a state or federal resource agency's program, plan, or initiative (including Florida's Coastal Management Program or Local Government Comprehensive Plans).
3. Project has the potential for significant environmental cost (e.g., monetary, environmental effects, or quality of life)
4. Project purpose and need is questionable (only applicable to the Lead Agency - identified by the Lead Agency not accepting the purpose and need)

### 2.7.3 Process to Resolve Potential Issues

After reviewing potential dispute commentary received during a Planning Screen Review, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator contacts the ETAT representative that raised the potential issue to discuss the concern and identify potential solutions to address the issue and advance the project.

When there is an inability to reach a suitable resolution, the issue is elevated to FDOT or MPO/TPO upper management, who then may:

1. Resolve the issue through coordination and documentation
2. Advance the project with or without conditions (for a Planning Screen project)
3. Revise the project concept
4. Complete a technical or feasibility study to address concerns
5. Reject the project

Agreements, understandings, and/or recommendations resulting from the issue resolution efforts are documented in the **Planning Screen Summary Report** and accompany the project as it moves to the Programming Screen.

An unresolved issue during the Planning Screen, however, does not prevent a project from advancing to the Programming Screen. It simply identifies the project as having potential issues that may require attention during the Programming Screen. The Planning Screen Potential Issue Resolution process is diagrammed in **Figure 2-5**.



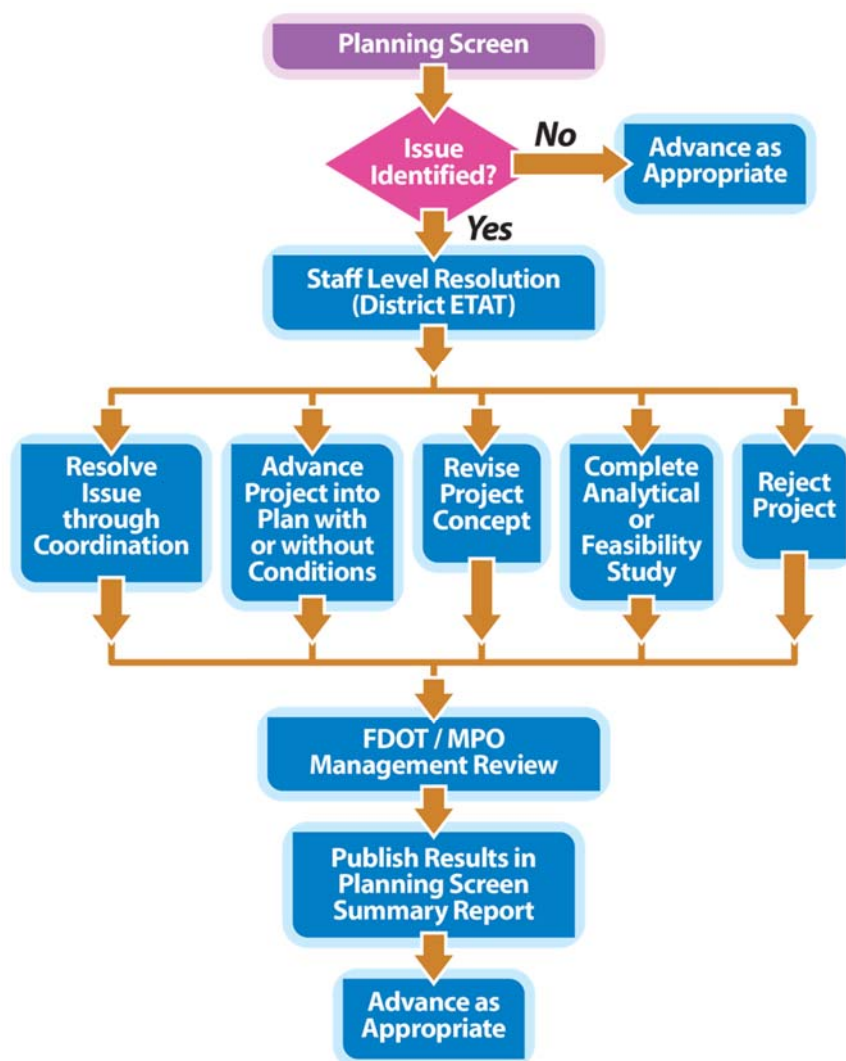


Figure 0-5: Planning Screen Potential Issue Resolution Process

### 2.7.4 Informal Issue Resolution

After assigning a Dispute Resolution SDOE during the Programming Screen, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator forms a sub-team of the ETAT (including the State Clearinghouse, if consistency is an issue) to review each issue as part of the Informal Issue Resolution process. FDOT leads this sub-team; participation is at the discretion of each agency, depending on the level of interest or concern. The sub-team includes those agencies that identified the concerns for a given project, plus one or more willing and neutral ETAT representatives to help mediate discussions. The sub-team undertakes a course of action to address identified issues, which may include:

1. Resolving the issue through consultation and documenting the resolution

2. Recommending FDOT complete an environmental or technical study for ETAT review
3. Advancing the project with conditions

Agreements, understandings, and/or recommendations resulting from the Informal Issue Resolution process are documented in the **Programming Screen Summary Report** and accompany the project as it moves to PD&E. **Figure 2-6** diagrams the Informal Issue Resolution process.

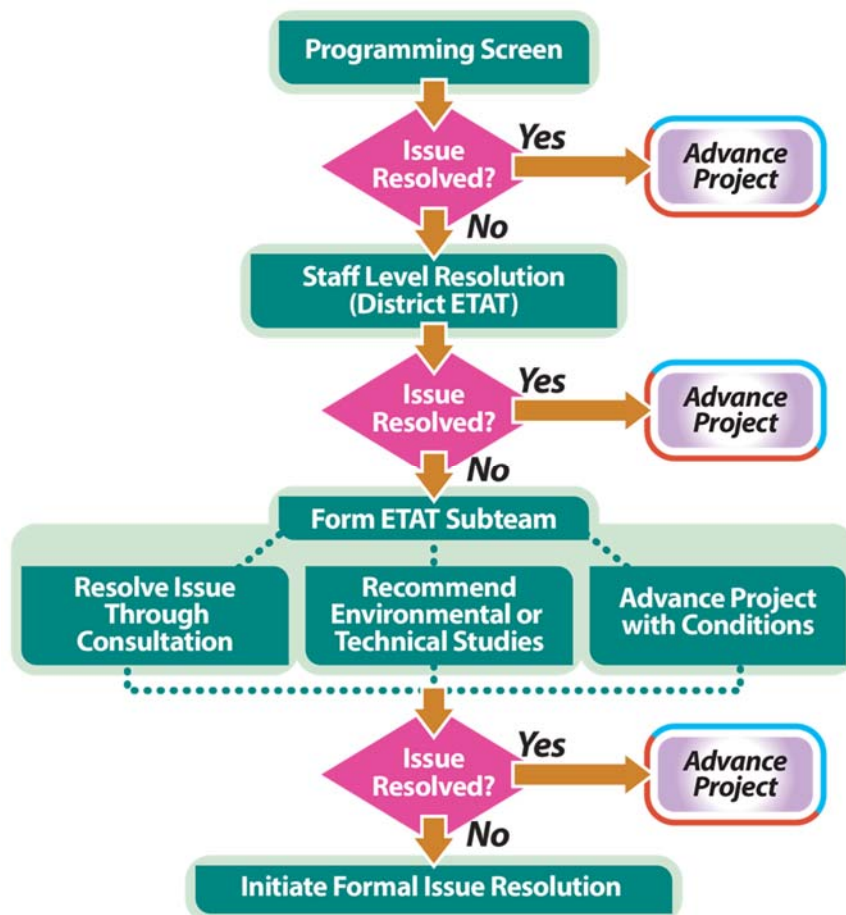


Figure 0-6: Informal Issue Resolution Process

### 2.7.5 Formal Issue Resolution

If an issue cannot be resolved through the Informal Issue Resolution process, the discussion enters into the Formal Issue Resolution process diagrammed in **Figure 2-7**. The FDOT ETDM Coordinator prepares a **Position Paper**, and the agency with the issue or conflict prepares an **Issue Paper**. The locally responsible ETAT agency head (or governing board, as applicable) who raised the issue and the FDOT District Secretary review both papers and then attempt to resolve the issue(s), if possible.



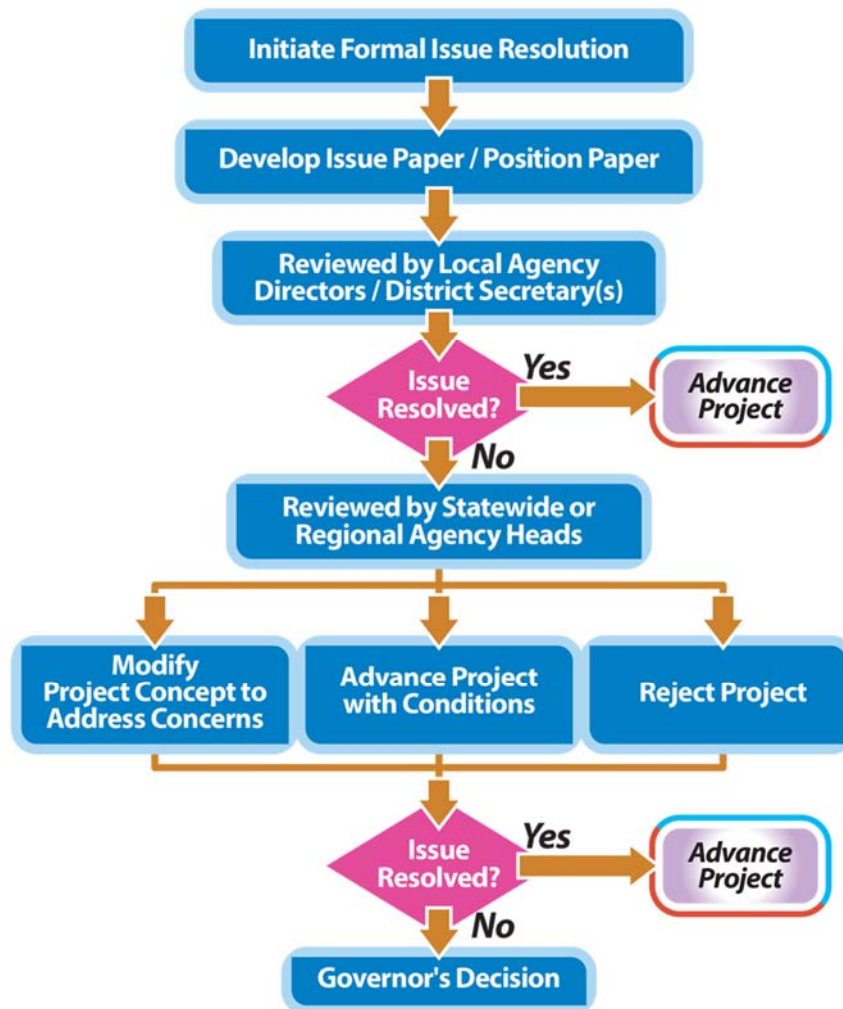


Figure 0-7: Formal Issue Resolution Process

If they are not able to do this, the issue moves to the statewide or regional agency heads (or governing board, as applicable), who will make the final decision on how to address unresolved issues. The course of action may include:

1. Resolving the issue through consultation and documenting the resolution
2. Recommending FDOT to complete an environmental or technical study for ETAT review

3. Advancing the project with conditions
4. Rejecting the project

Should a federal agency disagree with the decision, the Federal Dispute Resolution process may be initiated. If there are unresolved issues for FHWA projects undergoing **NEPA** review, then the “issue resolution” process set out in **23 U.S.C. § 139, as amended**, will be applicable. The process in **23 U.S.C. § 139** establishes a series of forums for issues to be resolved, and if not resolved, to which the issues would then advance, including potential financial penalties for unexcused delays by participating agencies.

Nothing in this Issue Resolution process affects the statutorily prescribed duties and obligations of any agency or any agency’s responsibility or ability to discharge fully such duties and obligations under all applicable laws and regulations. The ETDM Issue Resolution process seeks to fulfill all statutory obligations in seeking solutions to complex issues among agencies.

## 2.8 REFERENCES

- 15 CFR Part 930. Coastal Zone Management Act Federal Consistency Regulations.
- 23 CFR Part 450. Planning Assistance and Standards.
- 23 U.S.C, §135 and §139 (as amended).
- 36 CFR § 800(b). Protection of Historic Properties, The Section 106 Process.
- 40 CFR § § 1500-1508. Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act. 1978.
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## **2.9 HISTORY**

03/2006 Original publication

07/2013 Updated to reflect current legal requirements and practices

12/2015 Updated to reflect current legal requirements and practices